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## Resolution adopted by the General Assembly

[*without reference to a Main Committee (A/58/L.52 and Add.1)*]

### 58/128. Promotion of religious and cultural understanding, harmony and cooperation

*The General Assembly*,

*Reaffirming* the purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,[1]

*Underlining* the importance of promoting understanding, tolerance and friendship among human beings in all their diversity of religion, belief, culture and language, and recalling that all States have pledged themselves under the Charter to promote and encourage universal respect for and observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms for all, without distinction as to race, sex, language or religion,

*Affirming* that inter-religious dialogue is an integral part of the efforts to translate shared values, as reflected in the United Nations Millennium Declaration,[2] into actions, in particular the efforts to promote a culture of peace and dialogue among civilizations,

*Recalling* its resolution 57/6 of 4 November 2002, in which it invited Member States to expand their activities promoting a culture of peace and non-violence at the national, regional and international levels,

*Recalling also* its other relevant resolutions,

*Recalling with satisfaction* the proclamation of the Global Agenda for Dialogue among Civilizations,[3] bearing in mind the valuable contribution that dialogue among civilizations can make to an improved awareness and understanding of the common values shared by all humankind,

[1] Resolution 217 A (III).

[2] See resolution 55/2.

[3] Resolution 56/6.

*Recalling* the Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization[4] and the principles contained therein,

*Emphasizing* the need, at all levels of society and among nations, for strengthening freedom, justice, democracy, tolerance, solidarity, cooperation, pluralism, respect for diversity of culture and religion or belief, dialogue and understanding, which are important elements for peace,

*Reaffirming* that freedom of expression, media pluralism, multilingualism, equal access to art and to scientific and technological knowledge, including in digital form, and the possibility for all cultures to have access to the means of expression and dissemination are the guarantees of cultural diversity, and that in ensuring the free flow of ideas by word and image, care should be exercised that all cultures can express themselves and make themselves known,

*Recognizing* all efforts made by the United Nations system to promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among human beings in all their diversity of culture, religion, belief and language,

*Alarmed* that serious instances of intolerance and discrimination on the grounds of religion or belief, including acts of violence, intimidation and coercion motivated by religious intolerance, are on the increase in many parts of the world and threaten the enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms,

*Considering* that tolerance for cultural, ethnic, and religious and linguistic diversities, as well as dialogue among and within civilizations, is essential for peace, understanding and friendship among individuals and people of different cultures and nations of the world, while manifestations of cultural prejudice, intolerance and xenophobia towards different cultures and religions generate hatred and violence among peoples and nations throughout the world,

*Emphasizing* that combating hatred, prejudice, intolerance and stereotyping on the basis of religion or culture represents a significant global challenge that requires further action,

1. *Acknowledges* that respect for the diversity of religions and cultures, tolerance, dialogue and cooperation in a climate of mutual trust and understanding can contribute to the combating of ideologies and practices based on discrimination, intolerance and hatred and help to reinforce world peace, social justice and friendship among peoples;

2. *Reaffirms* the solemn commitment of all States to fulfil their obligations to promote universal respect for, and observance and protection of, all human rights and fundamental freedoms for all in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, other instruments relating to human rights, and international law; the universal nature of these rights and freedoms is beyond question;

3. *Also reaffirms* the importance for all peoples and nations to hold, develop and preserve their cultural heritage and traditions in a national and international atmosphere of peace, tolerance and mutual respect;

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[4] United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, *Records of the General Conference, Thirty-first Session, Paris, 15 October–3 November 2001*, vol. 1: *Resolutions*, chap. V, resolution 25, annex I.

4. *Recognizes* that respect for religious and cultural diversity in an increasingly globalizing world contributes to international cooperation, promotes enhanced dialogue among religions, cultures and civilizations, and helps to create an environment conducive to the exchange of human experience;

5. *Also recognizes* that all cultures and civilizations share a common set of universal values;

6. *Further recognizes* that, while the significance of national and regional particularities and various historical, cultural and religious backgrounds must be borne in mind, it is the duty of States, regardless of their political, economic and cultural systems, to promote and protect all human rights and fundamental freedoms;

7. *Reaffirms* that the promotion and protection of the rights of persons belonging to national or ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities contribute to political and social stability and peace and enrich the cultural diversity and heritage of society as a whole in the States in which such persons live, and urges States to ensure that their political and legal systems reflect the multicultural diversity within their societies and, where necessary, to improve democratic and political institutions, organizations and practices so that they are more fully participatory and avoid the marginalization and exclusion of, and discrimination against, specific sectors of society;

8. *Encourages* Governments to promote, including through education, understanding, tolerance and friendship among human beings in all their diversity of religion, belief, culture and language, which will address the cultural, social, economic, political and religious sources of intolerance, and to apply a gender perspective while doing so, in order to promote understanding, tolerance, peace and friendly relations among nations and all racial and religious groups, recognizing that education at all levels is one of the principal means to build a culture of peace;

9. *Calls upon* all States to exert their utmost efforts to ensure that religious sites are fully respected and protected in compliance with their international obligations and in accordance with their national legislation, and to adopt adequate measures aimed at preventing acts or threats of damage to and destruction of these sites;

10. *Urges* States, in compliance with their international obligations, to take all necessary action to combat incitement to or acts of violence, intimidation and coercion motivated by hatred and intolerance based on culture, religion or belief, which may cause discord and disharmony within and among societies;

11. *Also urges* States to take effective measures to prevent and eliminate discrimination on the grounds of religion or belief in the recognition, exercise and enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms in all fields of civil, economic, political, social and cultural life and to make all efforts to enact or rescind legislation, where necessary, to prohibit any such discrimination, and to take all appropriate measures to combat intolerance on the grounds of religion or beliefs;

12. *Further urges* States to ensure that, in the course of their official duties, members of law enforcement bodies and the military, civil servants, educators and other public officials respect different religions and beliefs and do not discriminate against persons professing other religions or beliefs, and that any necessary and appropriate education or training is provided;

13. *Welcomes* the efforts of States, relevant entities of the United Nations system and other intergovernmental organizations, civil society, including religion-based and other non-governmental organizations, and the media in developing a culture of peace, and encourages them to continue such efforts, including the promotion of inter-religious and intercultural interaction within and among societies through, inter alia, congresses, conferences, seminars, workshops, research work and related processes;

14. *Requests* the Secretary-General to ensure the widest dissemination of the relevant United Nations material related to the present resolution in as many different languages as possible through the United Nations system, including the United Nations information centres, within available resources;

15. *Also requests* the Secretary-General to present to the General Assembly at its fifty-ninth session a report on the implementation of the present resolution.

*76th plenary meeting*
*19 December 2003*